

REMARKS

The above amendments to the above-captioned application along with the following remarks are being submitted as a full and complete response to the Official Action dated February 27, 2004. In view of the above amendments and the following remarks, the Examiner is respectfully requested to give due reconsideration to this application, to indicate the allowability of the claims, and to pass this case to issue.

Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to acknowledge the claim for priority filed on December 20, 2001, under 35 USC § 119 in the next Office Action.

Status of the Claims

Claims 31-46 are under consideration in this application. Claims 1-3, 5-20, 22-30 and 47-52 are being cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer.

Allowable Subject Matters

Claims 31-46 were allowed.

Prior Art Rejections

Claims 1-3, 5-20, 22-30 and 47-52 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Pat. No. 3,344,984 to Kopczynski et al. (hereinafter "Kopczynski").

As indicated, claims 1-3, 5-20, 22-30 and 47-52 are being cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. The rejection thus becomes moot.

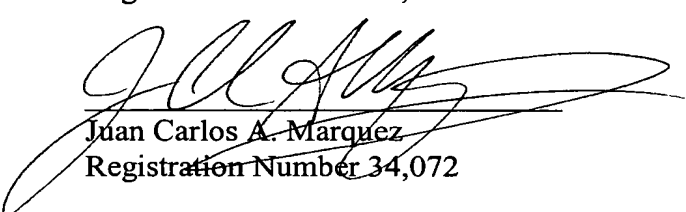
In view of all the above, clear and distinct differences as discussed exist between the present invention as now claimed and the prior art reference upon which the rejections in the Office Action rely, Applicants respectfully contend that the prior art references cannot anticipate the present invention or render the present invention obvious. Rather, the present invention as a whole is distinguishable, and thereby allowable over the prior art.

Favorable reconsideration of this application is respectfully solicited. Should there be any outstanding issues requiring discussion that would further the prosecution and allowance of the

above-captioned application, the Examiner is invited to contact the Applicants' undersigned representative at the address and phone number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,

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